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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

on the work of its third special session

3–5 February 1992

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 25 (A/47/25)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to Governing Council decision 16/3 of 31 May 1991 and General Assembly decision 46/462 of 20 December 1991, the third special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was held at UNEP headquarters, Nairobi, from 3 to 5 February 1992. The Council adopted the present report at the 5th meeting of the session, on 5 February 1992.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening of the session

2. The third special session of the UNEP Governing Council was opened on 3 February 1992 by Mr. L. P. J. Mazairac (Netherlands), President of the Council.

B. Attendance

3. The following States members of the Governing Council 1/ were represented at the session:

Argentina
Australia
Austria
Bangladesh
Bhutan
Brazil
Burundi
Chile
China
Colombia
Côte d'Ivoire
Czechoslovakia
Denmark
France
Gambia
Germany
Guyana
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Italy
Japan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lesotho
Malaysia
Mauritius
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Rwanda
Senegal
Spain
Sri Lanka
Thailand
Tunisia
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Uruguay
Venezuela
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zimbabwe

1/ The membership of the Governing Council was determined by elections held at the 45th plenary meeting of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, held on 6 November 1989, the 66th plenary meeting of the forty-fifth session, held on 12 December 1990, and the 35th plenary meeting of the forty-sixth session, held on 22 October 1991 (decisions 44/309, 45/317 and 46/306).

4. The following States not members of the Governing Council were represented by observers:

Belgium
Canada
Central African Republic
Costa Rica
Djibouti
Egypt
Estonia
Finland
Ghana
Greece
Guinea
Holy See
Iceland
Iraq
Israel
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Liberia
Malawi
Maldives
Mauritania
Morocco
Mozambique
Oman
Republic of Korea
Saudi Arabia
Sudan
Sweden
Switzerland
Syrian Arab Republic
Togo
Turkey
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Yemen
Zambia

5. The following United Nations bodies and secretariat units were represented:

Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

United Nations Department of Technical Cooperation of Development

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO)

6. The following specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system were represented:

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Bank

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO

7. The following other intergovernmental organizations were represented:

Commission of the European Communities (CEC)

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

8. In addition, 14 international non-governmental organizations were represented by observers.

9. The following other organizations were represented by observers:

African National Congress of South Africa (ANC)

Palestine

C. Officers

10. According to rule 18 of the rules of procedure, "at the commencement of the 1st meeting of its regular session, the Governing Council shall elect a President, three Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur from among its members". Rule 19 provides that the President, Vice-Presidents and Rapporteur shall hold office until their successors are elected (i.e. at the 1st meeting of the next regular session) but none of them may hold office after the expiration of the term of office of the member of whom he is a representative. Accordingly, the following four officers, elected at the sixteenth regular session, continued to serve in their respective capacities at the third special session:

President: Mr. L. P. J. Mazairac (Netherlands)

Vice-Presidents: Mr. H. Dalindra Aman (Indonesia)
Mr. C. A. Liburd (Guyana)
Mr. F. Penazka (Czechoslovakia)

11. In addition, the Council, at the opening meeting of the session, elected Mr. E. T. Mundangepfupfu (Zimbabwe) by acclamation to the office of Rapporteur, which had fallen vacant by virtue of the expiration, on 31 December 1991, of the term of office of the Council member of whom the Rapporteur elected at the sixteenth session, Mr. J. Atwoki Kamanyire (Uganda), was a representative.

D. Credentials

12. In accordance with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure of the Council, the Bureau examined the credentials of the representatives attending the third special session. The credentials were found to be in order and the President, on behalf of the Bureau, so reported to the Council, which approved the Bureau's report at the 5th meeting of the session, on 5 February.

E. Agenda

13. At the opening meeting of the session, the Council adopted the following agenda for the session on the basis of the provisional agenda approved by the Council at its sixteenth session (UNEP/GCSS.III/1):

1. Opening of the session.

2. Adoption of the agenda.

3. Credentials of representatives.

4. Consideration of the synthesis state-of-the-environment report to be presented to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

5. Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and its financing.

6. Consideration of the Secretary-General's consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187.

7. Adoption of the report.

8. Closure of the session.

F. Organization of the work of the session

14. At the opening meeting of the session, the Council considered and approved the organization of the work of the session in the light of the recommendations contained in the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.III/1/Add.1/Rev.1) and the timetable of meetings suggested by the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.III/1/Add.1/Rev.1, annex I).

15. The Council also decided to establish an informal open-ended negotiating group under the chairmanship of the President, with a core membership of two representatives from each regional group, to consider the texts of draft decisions before their submission to the plenary for formal consideration.

G. Introductory statement by the Executive Director

16. At the opening meeting of the session, the Council heard a statement by the Executive Director in which he welcomed participants and introduced the substantive agenda items before the Council.

17. Stressing the need for specific, detailed, costed and workable action plans to be tabled at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, ready for endorsement and commitment for funding, he said that the analytical state-of-the-environment report before the Council showed that, despite all the efforts deployed, the global environment was currently worse than it had been two decades previously. Not one major environmental issue raised at the Stockholm Conference had been solved, while new problems of planetary dimensions had emerged. Steps forward had been made in certain key areas, yet hard-won gains were too often offset by accelerating destruction in others. The report also outlined examples of achievable targets that could constitute an agenda for action for the next decade. None of those goals could be achieved unless the world community addressed a number of closely linked issues, such as technology transfer, additional financial resources, popular participation, authoritative costing of response strategies, fair sharing of natural resources, fundamental reforms of pricing regimes to include costs of environmental goods and services, the unnecessary conflict between trade regulations and environmental standards, and giving a fair share of the global trade market to the developing countries. The London Amendment to the Montreal Protocol had begun to address the issue of technology transfer, and progress was under way in the area of additional resources with the Global Environment Facility and the Ozone Multilateral Fund. But it was clear that the magnitude of resources needed was beyond the capacity of the strained government budgets. There was no alternative but to discuss seriously and urgently new sources of revenue generation to ensure adequacy and automaticity of badly needed funds. It was also necessary to ensure that programmes already funded were workable and received the support of the people. While recognizing that the Council could not decide on all those issues, he believed that it could send the strongest signal of support to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which would be judged by its resolution of such issues. Success of the Conference hinged on progress made over the forthcoming two or three months, in final rounds of the negotiations on climate change and biological diversity and at the fourth and final session of the Preparatory Committee.

18. The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on sustainable development outlined initiatives taken at the national level and within the United Nations system to help implement the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development and the Environmental Perspective. The report identified much positive work that had already been done and revealed how much more was required.

19. His report on desertification showed that the record on that issue had been pathetic. The report included a number of costed policy options to deal with the problem: one involving the protection of the 30 per cent of dryland areas least affected or non-affected by desertification, a second adding corrective measures to drylands moderately desertified; and a third embracing the entire scope of desertification. It was incorrect to believe the least expensive route, involving the least affected drylands, was the best. While

the second option would be more costly, without it more land would be rendered non-productive, at the very time when every square inch was needed to produce food, especially in dryland areas where many of the world's poor resided.

20. Despite its shortcomings, and in the face of an understaffed and under-financed secretariat, UNEP has helped to table complex issues that demanded tough choices. The first phase of the management and organization study of UNEP requested by the Council at its sixteenth session had been completed, and the findings had been circulated to the Council as requested.

21. In conclusion, he said that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development provided an opportunity to build a new community of nations, around the principles of interdependence, partnership, global economic justice and intergenerational responsibility. It was an opportunity that must not be missed.

22. The full text of the Executive Director's statement was subsequently circulated as an official document of the Council (UNEP/GCSS.III/5 and Corr.1).

H. Statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

23. At its opening meeting, the Council also heard a statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, delivered on his behalf by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, in which he outlined the tasks before the forthcoming final session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. The core of the documentation before that session consisted of proposals for Agenda 21, framed within the structure agreed on at the third session and containing assessments of the means required for implementation, including financing and costing. Stressing the importance for the Conference process of the substantive items currently before the Council, he said that, with regard to the issue of desertification, the Conference secretariat had had the benefit of the work done by UNEP for the special session and that had been fully taken into account in the proposals for Agenda 21 to be placed before the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session. There was also no doubt that the Executive Director's report on the state of the environment would provide a useful background to the discussion of Agenda 21.

24. The 100 or so programmes being considered for inclusion in Agenda 21 could not be described as purely environmental or purely developmental. They addressed both sets of issues and could be grouped around a few major themes: revitalization of growth and development; raising living standards; changing consumption patterns; managing human settlements; conservation of resources; use of shared resources; waste management; management of environmental risks; and strengthening of non-governmental groups. The means required for the programme were dealt with within each programme area, and it was very important that decisions on the programmes should be taken within the context of decisions on the means to implement them.

25. The implementation of Agenda 21 would require a major effort in the area of science, technology and capacity-building in developing countries. Those three areas, along with human resource development, in some ways constituted the most important initiative that must come from the Conference in order to create the potential for sustainable development in the twenty-first century. Improved arrangements for scientific cooperation, technology transfer and capacity-building in developing countries were vital, and specific agreements in each of those areas would have to be secured at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee.

26. The issue of finance also loomed large: the programme areas included indicative cost estimates, which would have to be worked out in greater detail when agreement was reached on the programmes. The total bill looked large in relation to current flows of development assistance, but that was because the mandate of the Conference was broad and covered virtually every area of development. The bulk of those requirements arose essentially from three clusters: the programmes addressing the issue of poverty and basic needs; those addressing problems of land, water and forest management; and, those dealing with human settlements. Hence, the discussion of financial requirements in the context of Agenda 21 had to deal as much, or even more, with developmental needs as with environmental demands. It should, however, be clarified that the cost and related transfers that would arise from commitments under various global conventions had to be assessed in the context of those conventions and were not necessarily covered in the action programmes under Agenda 21.

27. Finally, he said that the Conference was, in a certain sense, the end of the process. However, it must also be seen as the beginning of a global partnership and a new phase of development and environment cooperation in the international system. He had no doubt that UNEP would play as significant and important a role after the Conference as it was doing before it.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE SYNTHESIS STATE-OF-THE-ENVIRONMENT REPORT TO BE PRESENTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND ITS FINANCING

CONSIDERATION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 42/186 AND 42/187

28. In considering agenda items 4, 5 and 6 concurrently at the 1st to 4th meetings of the session, from 3 to 4 February, the Council had before it the following documentation:

(a) Under agenda item 4, the report of the Executive Director entitled "The state of the environment (1972-1992): saving our planet - challenges and hopes" (UNEP/GCSS.III/2 and Corr.1), together with suggested action by the Governing Council thereon (UNEP/GCSS.III/2/Add.1 and Corr.1), and draft chapter 24 of the comprehensive state-of-the-environment report (UNEP/GCSS.III/Inf.3);

(b) Under agenda item 5, the report of the Executive Director on the status of desertification and implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (UNEP/GCSS.III/3 and Corr.1/Rev.1), together with suggested action by the Governing Council thereon (UNEP/GCSS.III/3/Add.1), and a note by the Executive Director transmitting the report of the Secretary-General on the studies requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/172 A on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (UNEP/GCSS.III/Inf.2 and Corr.1);

(c) Under agenda item 6, a note by the Executive Director transmitting the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/227 (UNEP/GCSS.III/4 and Corr.1) and suggested action by the Council on the Secretary General's report (UNEP/GCSS.III/Add.1).

The Council also had before it three draft decisions submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, one on each of the items before it (UNEP/GCSS.III/L.1-3).

29. At the 1st plenary meeting of the session, the President recalled that, at its sixteenth session, the Council, by its decision 16/6, had invited the Executive Director to engage an internationally recognized consultancy firm to assess the management and organization of UNEP and to make the results available to Governments before 1 February 1992. The report of the management study had now been published and circulated in all official languages. Although the study was not on the agenda for the session, the contents of the report were related to the issues before the Council. Therefore, comments on the report would not be ruled out of order.

30. Agenda items 4, 5 and 6 were introduced by the Executive Director in his introductory statement to the Council at the opening meeting of the session.

The full text of that statement is contained in document UNEP/GCSS.III/5 and Corr.1, and a brief summary appears in chapter II, paragraphs 16-22 above.

A. General observations

31. In the discussion of agenda items 4, 5 and 6, many representatives referred to the fact that the special session of the Governing Council was taking place at a critical stage in the preparation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and that it was vitally important for UNEP to submit inputs of a very high standard ensuring the accuracy of all factual material submitted. One representative considered that the Governing Council should guide UNEP through the UNCED process, enabling UNEP to perform its present and future functions.

32. Some representatives pointed out that global participation and cooperation, as well as particular recognition of the needs of the developing countries, were essential for a successful outcome to the Conference. Some representatives expressed confidence that UNCED would provide the possibility for exploring new approaches.

33. One representative stressed the importance of coordinated NGO input to UNCED. Another representative mentioned that a consultative mechanism allowing all sectors of society to participate in the preparatory work of the Conference had been established in his country.

34. Some representatives said that they would make the necessary commitment to ensure the success of UNCED in all its aspects and considered that the institutional recommendations that the Conference would make were fundamental to the success of subsequent action, while one representative stated that the findings of UNCED could be implemented by existing institutions after a restructuring of the United Nations system. Other representatives advocated that specific modalities for implementation be an integral part of all discussions, that the outputs should be action-oriented, and that mechanisms should be established for the prevention and settlement of disputes on environmental matters.

35. One representative said he expected Agenda 21 would be approved and attached paramount importance to concrete action on the sustainable development of the living resources of the oceans, the development of an international convention on the prevention of marine pollution, the restriction and elimination of dumping of persistent organic substances, improved international regulations on the transportation of hazardous substances and the establishment of economic incentives for the promotion of environmentally sound products. Some representatives emphasized the need to address the question of improving environmental monitoring.

36. Several representatives referred to the importance of adopting a convention on biological diversity and one representative stressed that multilateral institutions and mechanisms created in that framework should be transparent and democratic in their functioning in order to gain the confidence of the developing countries.

37. One representative supported the establishment of a United Nations centre for response to environmental emergencies and stated that assistance was needed by the developing countries to formulate enforceable national legislation to complement existing regional and international legal instruments.

38. Many representatives referred to the importance of UNEP in implementing the decisions of UNCED and to its new role in taking up that challenge. One called for a mechanism to review progress by Governments in fulfilling the commitments made at the Conference.

B. Consideration of the synthesis state-of-the-environment report to be presented to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

39. Numerous representatives expressed their great appreciation for the work UNEP had done in preparing the state-of-the-environment report. Many said that it represented an important contribution to UNCED, one stating that it could be regarded as one of the principal documents for that Conference.

40. Many representatives said the report provided a clear and balanced description of the major problems facing the world. The observer for the Commission of the European Communities said that the findings of UNEP's report corresponded to the CEC's own critical evaluation of the state of the environment.

41. One representative said the report contributed to the understanding of the causes and effects of environmental degradation, thereby providing a basis for effective action. Another found the analysis particularly commendable in the area of economics and trade, identifying international policies that impacted on the environment of developing countries. Many representatives agreed that it was of paramount importance to base future action on knowledge of the real situation of the planet. According to one representative, the report highlighted the key areas in which UNEP could contribute to implementing the decisions of UNCED: the development of international environmental law and subsequent verification of the implementation of law; assessment and monitoring of the state of the environment; and providing support for environmental management in developing countries. Another representative said he considered the report's establishment of the linkages between environmental and developmental activities to be crucial to actions and strategies that were likely to be adopted at UNCED; the report's up-to-date evaluations could serve as a guiding light for resolutions and decisions for Agenda 21.

42. A number of representatives said that the report showed areas where the environment had improved over the past 20 years and many areas where environmental damage had increased. One representative said the report showed that sustainable development had not been attained: the state of the environment was extremely serious and it would be irresponsible to delay taking drastic measures. Another representative expressed the belief that although some progress had been achieved, the growing waste mountain, high levels of water pollution, damage to groundwater from hazardous substances and desertification and deforestation were of great concern.

43. Several representatives pointed to UNEP's major responsibility within the United Nations for monitoring, synthesizing and reporting on the state of the environment. Such information, said one representative, was essential to allow UNEP to continue to play its central coordinating and catalytic functions. One representative and the observer from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) said that UNEP's role in data gathering should be expanded.

44. One representative expressed the view that the concept of "stewardship" of the Earth should have received greater emphasis in the report, with stress on the cost that waste of resources and degradation of the environment would mean for humankind and its supporting ecosystem.

45. Several representatives said that the origins of environmental problems, such as ozone depletion, global warming, climate change, acid rain and marine pollution lay with the developed countries, which also had the financial and technical resources to remedy them. One representative said that the political will to implement solutions was lacking.

46. In reply to a question on why pesticides and fertilizer subsidies and not agricultural subsidies were cited in the report as leading to degradation of the environment in developing countries with no reference to the effects of the use of agro-chemicals in developed countries, the Executive Director pointed to several other paragraphs that did in fact cite agricultural subsidies and other factors.

47. Several representatives were pleased to note the action suggested by the Executive Director in relation to the state-of-the-environment report. It was, one stated, constructive and full of vision, but needed some adjustments to make it realistic and to make it reflect the fact that partnership was of paramount importance in protecting the environment, a partnership with rights and obligations of all concerned and with mutual trust and respect. In the context of taking action, one representative described his country's plans to freeze carbon dioxide emissions at their 1990 level by the year 2000 and to restructure taxation to ensure energy efficiency and reduce carbon dioxide. One representative expressed disappointment that the London Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer had not entered into force as scheduled and he urged Governments to accede to it.

48. The observer for IUCN said that the intention of the joint IUCN/UNEP/Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) report, Caring for the Earth, was not to urge policies on Governments - it should have a neutral policy as to specific remedies, while leaving the reader in no doubt as to the urgency of national and international action on the major issues presented. The report, he continued, covered fairly and reasonably the issues of deforestation, habitat change and loss of biodiversity.

49. Some representatives said their Governments attached paramount importance to the issues of marine pollution and sustainable harvesting of marine resources. Another representative was of the view that the state-of-the-environment report should also address the issue of high mountain ecosystems. The Executive Director assured him that this area would be covered in the comprehensive report.

50. One representative said that he would have liked to see a more detailed account in the report of the environmental disaster that faced his country following a period of conflict, where oil spills and landmines represented a daily threat.

51. Speaking in reply, the Executive Director pointed out that within the limited space in the report devoted to "War and environment", a proportionate amount of space had in fact been allocated but further reporting on the situation would be forthcoming. In reply to another representative, who had wondered why the oil spills and use of chemical weapons in time of conflict against his country had not been mentioned in the report, the Executive Director said that no published literature on the environmental impact of the conflict had been available. When he was in possession of such material it could be used as a reference for further reporting.

52. One representative urged UNEP to look at how it could reinforce the Earthwatch Programme, including by giving greater priority in allocating resources to its Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) and Global Resource Information Database (GRID) programmes.

53. One representative, touching upon the issue of peace, security and the environment, described his country's proposal for a body to assist in settling environmental disputes, to be administered by UNEP. The observer for the International Council of Environmental Law drew attention to the final recommendations, drawn up with the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law, for a law concerning protection of the environment in times of armed conflict.

54. One representative stressed the importance of forests at global, regional and national levels and, in this context, some representatives noted that a pertinent declaration on forests, ultimately leading to a convention, was likely to be adopted at UNCED. Several representatives referred to their countries' sound national plans on forest use and conservation.

55. One representative said that developing countries must be allowed to utilize their forests to ensure their development, pointing out the fallacy of stating that forests in Europe were suffering little degradation - the only basis for such a statement was that most of the damage had already been done long ago by European countries promoting their own development. The representative queried the figures related to carbon dioxide emissions due to deforestation and pointed out that such figures were debatable. She also questioned the accuracy of the statement made in paragraph 22.24 and pointed out that her country was using forests sustainably.

56. In reply, the Executive Director said that the basis for the figures cited in the report was correct, but went on to acknowledge that the representative's point on paragraph 22.24 should be reflected in the Governing Council's report on the work of the session.

57. One representative proposed a number of priorities for action to be introduced, namely, capacity-building for effective technology transfer needs, the strengthening of training and education and the enhancement of environmental industries and enterprises in developing countries. He went on to propose a further additional target for the year 2000 under "Environment and economics", namely, that all countries use the appropriate mix of

regulatory and economic instruments for pollution control and waste management. With respect to priority areas, information and awareness-building should be included.

58. One representative emphasized the need to ensure that contributions to UNCED were factually correct and voiced concern over the accuracy and selection of some data in the report.

59. The observer for FAO urged caution regarding the target to end net global deforestation by 2000-2010. That and other targets, he said, underestimated the complexity of the root causes of environmental problems and the time-lag required for funding to bring results.

60. The observer for WMO said he was disappointed that the chapter on climate change made no mention of the World Climate Programme or the Global Climate Observing System, and hoped that that could be corrected in the comprehensive report.

61. In reply, the Executive Director said that at the time the report was being finalized the new World Climate Programme and the Global Climate Observing System were not yet approved. However, the elements referred to would be included in the comprehensive report.

62. A number of representatives said they needed more time to study the report, which was not available in their capitals at the time of the meeting. One representative expressed particular regret at the shortness of time available to study the report, as that item on the agenda was the topic that justified the holding of the special session. Several representatives said that any in-depth reaction to the report would have to wait for its consideration in the context of UNCED.

63. The Executive Director apologized for the tardy distribution of the report, stating it had been due to an awesome translation load in late 1991.

64. Several representatives expressed disappointment that the Executive Director would be unable to complete his comprehensive state-of-the-environment report in time for submission to UNCED; a number of them, however, expressed understanding of the reasons. A number of representatives said they looked forward to the publication of the comprehensive report. One representative said that the environment agenda set out in the draft chapter 24 of the comprehensive report was similar to UNCED's Agenda 21, and thus that document should go to the Preparatory Committee for review to ensure harmonization.

65. Some representatives said the state-of-the-environment report should be sent directly to the Preparatory Committee for UNCED for review and consideration, without any substantive decision from the present session of the Governing Council.

C. Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and its financing

66. Commenting on the Executive Director's report on the status of desertification and implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD), many representatives commended it as a basis for action by UNCED. A number of representatives observed that the complexity of the problem called for integrated economic, social and environmental development programmes and required the participation of local people, as well as combining research results with traditional popular knowledge and sustainable technology to enrich the natural resource base. The need at the regional, national and local levels for strengthening awareness and competence concerning environmental degradation in general and dryland management in particular was stressed by several representatives. One representative praised the report's targets in particular, adding that these should be assigned realistic benchmarks and indicators and that a feedback process should be provided so that recipient Governments and donors could keep abreast of activities and modify them accordingly or set corrective programmes in motion.

67. One representative, however, disagreed with the report's definition of desertification, asserting that it was too climate-oriented and, further, that it had been formulated without the participation of the Latin American countries.

68. Most speakers held that desertification was a global environmental problem, a few observing that much of its complexity stemmed from its regional or site-specific nature and should thus be treated accordingly. In this context, one representative stated that the report contained a discrepancy between its advocacy of local, national and regional action in its initial chapters and its recommendation of a global approach in its conclusions. Another representative stated that global environmental problems and regional, national or local ones could be identified as such, but that these distinctions were somewhat artificial; desertification was one area in which local problems had to be addressed on the same footing as so-called global problems and required as much international cooperation. One representative called for hierarchical planning, linking the PACD with regional and national plans, including river catchment and local community land and water plans.

69. One representative drew attention to the activities being undertaken by the Regional Network of Research and Training Centres on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific. Another spoke of the Abidjan proposal for an international convention on halting desertification in Africa, suggesting that it be developed further within the UNCED process as a coordination mechanism to combat desertification on that continent. This view was echoed by several representatives, one of whom also called for additional resources to implement the Namibia/Kalahari Action Plan.

70. One representative focused on the acute problems of the Aral Sea region and its implications for adjacent areas, notably in respect of salt pulverization. Another spoke of the loss of plant cover in many previously verdant regions, adding that the growing number of refugees from dessicating areas aggravated the pressures on other communities; anti-desertification activities, like re-afforestation programmes and water management, should consequently be an UNCED priority in which developing countries were ready to

play a significant role. One representative, emphasizing that desertification was by no means confined to developing countries, added that one of its greatest impacts was loss of biological diversity and hence genetic resources. Yet another representative linked desertification to both biological diversity and climate change.

71. The observer for ESCWA stated that the recent Arab Declaration on Environment, Development and Future Prospects, a regional contribution to UNCED, included as an urgent priority the development of arid areas and the struggle against desertification.

72. The observer for ANC held that apartheid policies had contributed to overuse of land and grazing areas in the homelands and, consequently, the great reduction of the homelands' capacity to support rural populations. ANC was therefore formulating a draft document on environmental policy that addressed desertification among many other problems.

73. The observer for the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office advocated the adoption of integrated programmes of agroforestry and sylvopastoral systems, adding, first, that a new approach to pastoral systems be applied, based on new ideas concerning the nature of rangeland ecosystems, and, second, that integrated approaches to natural resources management be used, particularly in the transitional areas of the region; however, as the ecosystems of the Sudano-Sahelian region had already reached the limits of their productive capacity, these countries had to develop new production and alternative livelihood systems that were not directly dependent on land resources. One representative also put forward this view, adding that new livelihoods should be created for rural people, notably women, small entrepreneurs and those who worked in the informal sector.

74. Several representatives held that the financial estimates contained in the report were imprecise or inadequate. The observer for FAO indicated that expenditure estimates could be significantly reduced through policy measures, better coordination and well targeted planning. One representative stated that there was a dislocation between the report's recommendations and objectives, on the one hand, and any dedicated implementation or financing mechanism on the other; a comprehensive examination of all options for management and administrative PACD funds was needed. Another representative stated that greater focus in traditional aid programmes on such elements as soil degradation and soil loss might be more effective than new international ventures in desertification control.

75. Several representatives called for funding through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) or a similar mechanism, while some others proposed the establishment of a "Green Fund" that would serve not only to combat desertification, but also global warming through the creation or replacement of carbon sinks. Several representatives drew attention to the need for transfer of technologies, as well as for additional funding. Several others asserted that the subsidies given by developed countries to their own farmers should be contributed to fighting desertification.

76. One representative cautioned that global problems, such as climate change and ozone depletion, might detract world attention from the magnitude of desertification. Another stated that when enormous expenditure such as that

required to combat desertification was considered, it was insufficient to make a simple addition of multiple components; an analysis of implementation activities was needed, taking into account institutional, social, educational and public opinion factors, among others, and indicating ways of achieving desirable outcomes while avoiding those which might hinder development efforts. He also stated that arms reduction, at least in its initial stage, would entail additional expenditure in itself, although ceasing the production of specific types of arms and a corresponding reduction of military budgets could release resources for combating desertification.

77. Several representatives held that UNEP could strengthen its role in the struggle against desertification by information exchange and policy coordination. Another stated that UNEP's coordination role could be strengthened by increasing its participation in the World Bank's multidonor national environmental action plans. Yet another observed that the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD), the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Observatory of the Sahel and the Sahara had proved to be efficient regional bodies for coordinating bilateral and multilateral aid. The major work of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control (DESCON), he added, should lie in monitoring, collecting data, exchanging information, coordinating regional groups and formulating policy recommendations.

D. Consideration of the Secretary-General's consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187

78. Many representatives noted with satisfaction that encouraging progress had been achieved in the substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, although the progress had been uneven; much remained to be done and further measures would be needed for the implementation of those resolutions at the national and international levels. Many representatives remarked that the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond had encouraged an integrated approach to environment and development at national and international levels, and said the Secretary-General's consolidated report provided a succinct analysis both of the efforts already made and of the outlook for further progress.

79. A number of representatives drew attention to the close relationship between the environment and economic and social development, emphasizing the need to coordinate policies and programmes so as to establish mutual support for the attaining of development objectives. Several representatives gave examples of the efforts their countries were making in that direction although some pointed to the difficulty of integrating environmental objectives in economic policies. Many representatives pointed out that economic growth and development in the developing countries were essential for the achievement of environmental protection and improvement.

80. There was a general consensus that it was necessary to strengthen partnership and coordination among and between developing and developed countries in order to achieve sustainable development. Several representatives emphasized the importance of reinforcing institutional and

legal structures at the national and international levels and supplementing them with economic incentives and better use of the market mechanism for environmental management. Attention was also drawn by some representatives to the need for sound and coherent national and international strategies. It was stressed by several representatives that commitment at the highest level was required for provision of increased financial, human and technological resources at national as well as international levels.

81. One representative, noting that the Secretary-General's consolidated report provided interesting details regarding new activities undertaken by a number of countries, said that such activities might assist other countries in formulating their own policies. Another said that chapter 5 of the report provided ideas on the institutional and policy changes required to make progress towards sustainable development.

82. Some representatives pointed out that the "consumerist" model of development followed by the developed countries was the main factor underlying environmental degradation and should be explicitly subjected to a critical review in the Secretary-General's report; since the report was based on responses received from only 38 countries and 29 United Nations agencies, it might not necessarily provide a representative idea of the actual progress made worldwide on sustainable development. One representative specifically pointed out that there were some conspicuous gaps in the report. In particular, certain regional initiatives such as those in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme had not been mentioned; moreover, certain countries had not been included even though a great deal was being done in those countries.

83. A number of representatives stressed the special responsibility of the developed countries in respect of past environmental degradation. They underlined the need for developed countries to make their patterns of consumption and production environmentally sound and to assist the developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

84. Many representatives underlined the importance of equitable trade practices, including fair terms of trade, market access for exports and access to technology, so as to allow developing countries to achieve sustainable development. One representative pointed out that environmental policies should not introduce trade distortions. Several representatives expressed the view that it was essential to reflect the costs of environmental degradation in the prices of relevant commodities and services so as to improve both economic efficiency and environmental management. One representative suggested that a tax be imposed on the consumption of natural resources. Another suggested that, if importing countries were ready to pay higher prices for exports from developing countries, those higher prices would contribute to the resources needed for environmental management in the latter countries. One representative pointed out that there was scope for the introduction of tradable emission rights on a global basis since it would be a cost-effective and equitable way of achieving the environmental objective of controlling global warming. He said that this should be done within an appropriate institutional framework and that UNEP had a significant role to play in that respect.

85. A number of representatives pointed out that the developing countries needed additional finance and concessionary transfer of environmentally sound technology because of the constraints they experienced owing to widespread poverty, external debts, trade deficits, unfavourable terms of trade and limited access to markets in developed countries. Some representatives urged the adoption of innovative approaches for the provision of adequate financial resources, for example, debt-for-nature swaps for the conservation of biological diversity and the rehabilitation of degraded lands. One representative said that countries that had achieved prosperity through improvident exploitation of natural resources in the past should bear the brunt of costs of environmental restoration.

86. Several representatives expressed the view that there should be increased public participation in decision-making and activities aimed at sustainable development. One representative expressed the view that environmental management practices in crucial economic sectors such as transport and forestry should receive increasing attention; UNEP was eminently qualified to provide environmental policy guidance for vital economic sectors. He also suggested that a special United Nations conference on sustainable transport systems should be convened.

87. One representative expressed the hope that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would agree to a comprehensive plan of action at all levels to achieve sustainable development, with arrangements for regular and open monitoring and review. Another representative drew attention to the importance of a commitment to sustainable development on the part of non-governmental organizations, and several emphasized that individuals, households, enterprises and communities must play an active role, together with Governments, in the adaptation of policies and practices in order to make sustainable development a reality.

88. One representative said that, in endeavouring to reach an international consensus on global sustainable development, it was imperative to recognize that different nations had different priorities and consequently differing views and interests; the actions and rights of States were conditioned, in part, by the interests of the environment and the rights of other States to pursue sustainable development. Another representative observed that the significance of cultural factors and environmental ethics in achieving sustainable development had not been mentioned in the Secretary-General's report and should be taken into account. Another expressed the view that equity, at all levels, should be an overriding principle in sustainable development programmes and policies. One representative suggested that the Secretary-General's consolidated report should be widely distributed in all countries, not only to ministries of the environment, but also to ministries and departments dealing with development.

89. The representative of ESCWA reported on progress made in his organization in promoting sustainable development, including the regional ministerial conference for Western Asia held in September 1991 and the organizational changes made within the secretariat in order to enhance its effectiveness.

90. On the issue of coordination for sustainable development within the United Nations system, the need for improved cooperation and coordination at

intergovernmental, inter-agency, regional and national levels was stressed by many delegations. Some noted the need for enhanced integration of United Nations environment activities with development activities while one emphasized that a new international economic order should be established. Another pointed out that effective technological cooperation was required. Several representatives stressed that, in conducting international cooperation for protection of the environment, State sovereignty must be fully respected.

91. Some representatives expressed the view that UNDP, the World Bank and UNEP should intensify their collaboration at the working level. Several representatives proposed that an environment and development coordination board be set up to monitor and promote sustainable development action in the United Nations system.

92. One representative suggested the formation of a small, regionally representative ad hoc working group, containing representatives of the most important United Nations bodies, including the World Bank, to develop proposals on how to strengthen the coordination function of UNEP and promote the idea of sustainable development. Others considered that overall policy guidelines should be given by intergovernmental meetings at ministerial level.

93. On the question of rationalization of institutional frameworks, several representatives thought that the proliferation of institutions and fragmentation of development activities within the United Nations system were to be avoided. One delegation proposed the outline for a reform of the United Nations system, based on four main pillars, namely, the security system, social system, economic system and the environmental system, working closely together and entailing the creation of a new entity based on UNEP; the reformed system would act as a global institutional framework.

94. One representative advocated the establishment of regional bodies working in the environment field, and another recommended the creation of a "green fund" to provide additional assistance to developing countries.

95. In connection with activities within the United Nations system aimed at achieving sustainable development, several representatives commented on the Coopers and Lybrand management and organization study on UNEP, requested by the Council in its decision 16/6 of 31 May 1991.

96. A number of representatives noted that the study contained valuable proposals for consideration of institutional reforms, some saying they could support many of the recommendations, though one cautioned that any change in the structure of UNEP should be in the context of decisions taken by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. One representative said it could support the transformation of UNEP into a United Nations agency if that action were recommended by the majority of nations present at the Conference. Another representative agreed that membership of the Governing Council should be increased to make it more representative.

97. One representative said he considered the principle of delegation of authority fundamental and hoped that the Executive Director would take speedy action to implement the consultant's proposals, though he could not agree with

the idea of assessed contributions nor to the status of a specialized agency, which would decrease UNEP's effectiveness.

98. Several delegations were disappointed at the findings of the study and said they did not consider that the consultants had followed their mandate precisely. One of those representatives requested the Executive Director to ensure that the second report supplemented the first, and asked what follow-up would be given to paragraph 709 relating to management, staffing and administrative questions. Another representative advocated that the proposals in chapters 3 and 6 of the study should be implemented immediately. One representative cautioned against certain adverse conclusions regarding UNEP's future role or its competence.

99. Many representatives agreed that the existing UNEP should be improved and strengthened, with increased staff and financing; some considered that funding should be predictable and steady and a number expressed their willingness to provide additional funding, one urging all other Governments to increase their contributions to UNEP.

E. Action by the Council

100. The Council then proceeded to consider and adopt, at its 5th meeting, three decisions on the items before it (decisions SS.III/1-3). The text of these decisions is contained in annex I to the present report, and their process of adoption, including any comments made at the time, is recorded in chapter V below.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

101. The present report was adopted at the 5th plenary meeting of the session, on 5 February, on the basis of the draft circulated as document UNEP/GCSS.III/L.4 and Add.1 and 2.

102. During the adoption of the report, the representative of Malaysia recalled that in the debate on agenda items 4, 5 and 6, she had queried the figures related to carbon dioxide emissions due to deforestation contained in the Executive Director's state-of-the-environment report (see para. 55 above). She still maintained that those figures were debatable and the only authority that could testify to their correctness was the author himself. She would not, however, request any amendment to the record of the Executive Director's response to her query (see para. 56 above), since it was an accurate reflection of what he had said.

V. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS*

Status of desertification and implementation of United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (decision SS.III.1)

103. At the 5th meeting of the session, on 5 February, the Council had before it a draft decision on this subject submitted by the Bureau (UNEP/GCSS.III/L.5), prepared on the basis of an earlier draft submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/GCSS.III/L.1).

104. The President, on behalf of the Bureau, informed the Council that footnote to paragraph 6 of the draft should read "in accordance with section I, paragraphs 15 (j) and (m), of General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989".

105. The Secretary informed the Council that the reference in the first line of paragraph 5 of the draft should be to paragraph 3, not paragraph 2.

106. The draft decision, as orally amended, was adopted by consensus.

107. The representative of the United States explained his Government's position on certain provisions of the decision in a statement made after the adoption of decision SS.III/2 (see para. 116 below).

Consolidated report of the Secretary-General on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 (decision SS.III/2)

108. At the 5th meeting of the session, on 5 February, the Council had before it a draft decision on this subject submitted by the Bureau (UNEP/GCSS.III/L.6), prepared on the basis of an earlier draft submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/GCSS.III/L.2).

109. Before the Council took up the draft decision, the Executive Director drew its attention to the financial implications of paragraph 11. He recalled that, by its decision 15/12 of 23 May 1989, the Council had decided to provide full language services for meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives as soon as the costs of those services could be provided from the regular budget of the United Nations. Subsequently, at its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly had approved a recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the United Nations regular budget would bear 25 per cent of those costs, with the remaining 75 per cent coming from the Environment Fund. That arrangement had not, however, been discussed between the United Nations Budget Division and UNEP and could not be implemented since the General Assembly could not allocate Environment Fund resources.

110. Following consultations with the Executive Director, the United Nations Comptroller and the Budget Division had agreed that the regular budget would

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* For the text of decisions adopted by the Governing Council at its third special session, see annex I to the present report.

cover the costs of full langugage services for six languages for four meetings a year, until the next regular session of the Governing Council, at which time the Council would have to decide whether to agree that 75 per cent of the costs of the language services could be borne from the Fund. That oral agreement, made during his visit to New York on 21 January 1992, had not yet been confirmed in writing. Until the next session of the Governing Council, the Committee of Permanent Representatives was limited to four meetings with full services in six languages. Explaining that the costs of providing full language services at Nairobi amounted to $205,000 for a one-day meeting, $296,000 for a three-day meeting and $350,000 for a five-day meeting, he said that he needed to know where funding would come from if, as a result of the invitation contained in paragraph 11 of the draft decision, the Committee of Permanent Representatives were to exceed the four meetings currently budgeted for under the regular budget.

111. The representative of Australia, speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, said that the Bureau of the Committee would meet with the Executive Director on Monday, 10 February, to discuss financial questions. If the draft decision was adopted, it would be necessary to discuss how to proceed without unnecessary costs to the budget. It was normal for the Committee to take up issues in working groups with English as the only working language, and such an arrangement might apply in the case under consideration. However, he was not at the moment in a position to describe the details that might be worked out.

112. At the suggestion of the President, the Council agreed that the President of the Council and the Chairman of the Committee of Permanent Representatives would meet with the Executive Director to discuss the organizational and financial consequences of paragraph 11 of the draft decision.

113. In considering the draft decision, the Council, on the proposal of the representative of India, decided to change the words "a sustainable development process" in paragraph 6 of the draft to read "achieving sustainable development".

114. The representative of Saudi Arabia, supported by several other representatives, suggested that the words "and safe" should be inserted after the words "environmentally sound" in the third line of paragraph 8 of the draft, since it was important to ensure that technology transferred was not only environmentally sound but also safe. Following a brief discussion, the representative of Saudi Arabia agreed to withdraw his amendment on the understanding that his point would be reflected in the Council's report on the work of the session.

115. The draft decision, as amended on the proposal of the representative of India, was adopted by consensus.

116. Speaking in explanation of position after the adoption of the decisions SS.III/1 and SS.III/2, the representative of the United States of America said that, in joining in the consensus on financial paragraphs of those decisions, he wished to remind the Council that, when the General Assembly had adopted resolution 44/228 in December 1989, the United States had expressed reservations about paragraph 15 (j) of its section I. He wished to make it clear once again that his Government interpreted the phrase "new and

additional financial resources" appearing in that paragraph as referring to newly available financial resources for environmentally sound projects. It did not mean additional to overall development assistance levels. Given the current severe restraints on the United States federal budget, particularly at a time of recession, there was virtually no chance that the United States Congress would appropriate additional development assistance funds over and above current levels. His Government did not wish to raise expectations that it would not be able to fulfil. If more funds were to be available for environmentally sound programmes, they would have to come from existing sources. He had no doubt that some of the funds currently going to unsustainable development projects could be effectively reprogrammed for environmentally sound projects. His Government recognized fully the need to mobilize adequate and additional financial and technical resources to enable developing countries to fulfil their responsibilities to help preserve, protect and improve the world's environment. It looked forward to a constructive discussion on the issue at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The state of the environment (1972-1992) (decision SS.III/3)

117. At the 5th meeting of the session, on 5 February, the Council had before it a draft decision on this subject submitted by the Bureau (UNEP/GCSS.III/L.7), prepared on the basis of an earlier draft submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/GCSS.III/L.3).

118. The draft decision was adopted by consensus.

119. Following the adoption of the decision, the President informed the Council that two additional proposals had been discussed in the informal negotiating group, but the group had decided not to forward them to the Governing Council for formal consideration. The first concerned the recently published IUCN/UNEP/WWF report Caring for the Earth. A Strategy for Sustainable Living. Because that report had not yet been received by many members, the negotiating group had decided that it would be inappropriate for the Council to give it an official seal of approval without formal consideration. That decision in no way implied that the group did not appreciate that the value of the report could be extremely high, especially in the light of its knowledge of the work accomplished by the two non-governmental organizations involved. He hoped that the Executive Director could assist those organizations in bringing the report to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, where it could be considered by delegations.

120. The second proposal that had been discussed in the informal negotiating group but not forwarded to the Council for formal consideration concerned parameters to be used as indicators to evaluate environmental quality. Once again, the group had no doubt about the value of suitable environmental parameters but it believed that the issue was too important to be considered in such a short time. He hoped that the Executive Director could look into the matter with UNEP staff members and experts and bring it up at the next regular session of the Governing Council, as the availability of suitable parameters could be of great service to planners and those involved in policy implementation, and the consideration of the matter fell fully within the mandate of UNEP.

VI. MATTERS REQUIRING THE SPECIFIC ATTENTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND/OR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

121. At its third special session, the Governing Council adopted three decisions, each of which concerns matters that have been considered by the General Assembly and which will be addressed by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and by the Conference itself.

122. There follows a brief summary of the content of, and background to those decisions, the full text of which is contained in annex I to the present report. Comments made at the time of their adoption are reflected in chapter V (paras. 103-120) above. A summary of the views and comments expressed during the Council's debate on the issues is contained in chapter III (paras. 28-100) above.

A. Desertification

123. By paragraph 6 of its resolution 44/172 A of 19 December 1989, the General Assembly, inter alia, invited the Governing Council to contribute substantially to the discussion of desertification at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, inter alia, by undertaking a general evaluation of the progress achieved in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. In response to that invitation, as well as to the other provisions of the same resolution, the Council had before it at its third special session the report of the Executive Director on the status of desertification and the implementation of the Plan of Action (UNEP/GCSS.III/3 and Corr.1/Rev.1).

124. By paragraph 1 of its decision SS.III/1 of 5 February 1992, the Council noted with appreciation the report of the Executive Director. By paragraphs 5 to 9 of the same decision, it recommended a certain number of actions to be taken by Governments to combat desertification and a number of areas in which international cooperation should be strengthened to that end. By paragraph 10 of the decision, the Council requested the Executive Director to transmit his report, together with the decision to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development for it to be made available to the Preparatory Committee for the Conference at its fourth session and, by paragraph 11, the Secretary-General of the Conference was invited to bring the Executive Director's report, together with the decision, to the attention of the Conference through its Preparatory Committee.

B. Consolidated report of the Secretary-General on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187

125. By paragraph 20 of its resolution 44/227 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare for submission to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, through, inter alia, the Governing Council of UNEP, a new consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to

resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, both of 11 December 1987, by Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system. Pursuant to that request, the Council at its third special session had before it the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 44/227 (UNEP/GCSS.III/4 and Corr.1).

126. By paragraph 1 of its decision SS.III/2 of 5 February 1992, the Governing Council noted with appreciation the consolidated report of the Secretary-General. By paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of the same decision, the Council expressed its satisfaction at certain actions and developments at the national level in some developed and developing countries, as indicated in the report, noted various measures taken by the organizations and organs of the United Nations system to adjust their programmes and activities to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and welcomed the positive developments in international cooperation on global environmental issues that had taken place since the adoption of resolutions 42/186 and 42/187. By paragraph 6 of the same decision, the Council recognized that progress in achieving sustainable development remained very limited and uneven in many areas and that further action was required, where appropriate, including such action as recommended in chapters V and VI of the consolidated report of the Secretary-General. By paragraphs 7 to 9 of the decision, the Council called upon Governments to take certain action in response to the Secretary-General's report and, by paragraph 10, it recommended to the General Assembly that progress towards environmentally sound and sustainable development be periodically reviewed and that it request the Secretary-General to bring to its attention any innovative or promising initiatives in that regard. Finally, by paragraph 12 of the decision, it invited the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to bring the decision and the Secretary-General's consolidated report to the attention of the Conference through its Preparatory Committee at its fourth session.

C. The state of the environment

127. At its fifteenth regular session, the Council, by paragraph 7 (b) of its decision 15/13 A of 23 May 1989, requested the Executive Director to prepare for presentation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development a brief analytical report on changes in the state of the world environment since 1972. Subsequently, by section I, paragraph 15 (a), of its resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly decided that one of the objectives of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should be to examine the state of the environment and changes that have occurred since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Consequently, in compliance with Council decision 15/13 A and bearing in mind the above-mentioned decision of the Assembly, the Council at its third special session had before it the analytical report of the Executive Director, entitled "The state of the environment (1972-1992): saving our planet - challenges and hopes" (UNEP/GCSS.III/2 and Corr.1), to be presented to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

128. By section I, paragraph 3, of its decision SS.III/3, the Council requested the Executive Director to bring the analytical report and the decision to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, through its Secretary-General and the Preparatory Committee for

the Conference at its fourth session. Similarly, by paragraph 3 of section II of the same decison, which concerned the state of the environment resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, the Council requested the Executive Director to bring the Consolidated Rehabilitation Programme prepared by the Governments of the region to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development through its Preparatory Committee.

VII. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

129. In his closing statement to the Council at the 5th meeting of the sesion, on 5 February, the Executive Director said that the strengthening of UNEP, which had been discussed at the session, did not merely entail enlarging budgets and expanding staffing; it demanded adjusting programmes, redesigning strategies and laying the groundwork for expanded responsibility after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The management and organization study prepared pursuant to Council decision 16/6 represented a good start in that direction. Since a number of recommendations of the study had addressed the delegation of authority by the Executivve Director, he believed he should make it clear that delegation of authority had been the basic principle governing his management of UNEP for years: the authority of the Executive Director had been, for at least the last seven years, fully delegated to each of the three assistant secretaries-general working in UNEP, a position set out in various Executive Director's bulletins, one of them dating from 1985. Other recommendations of the study that were within the authority of the Executive Director and would be considered by the UNEP Management Group and Management Committee not to be in conflict with possible decisions either of UNCED or the General Assembly when it considered the restructuring of the Secretariat would be reviewed during the current month to see if it was feasible to implememt them immediately.

130. In conclusion, he said, while it had often been said that environmental concerns were too important to be left to Governments alone, people did demand leadership from Governments. They expected Governments to enter the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development with courage and to leave it with specific action plans that squarely addressed the required financing and technology trnasfer, to define responsibility clearly and to identify specific modalities for the realization of the principles of equity and partnership.

131. In closing the session, also at the 5th meeting, the President said that the amount of time spent by the Council in its deliberations at the session indicated how seriously all delegations took the issues involved. One of the most promising achievements of the session was the agreement on wording on one of the most complicated issues that had been, and would continue to be, before the Council. Much hard work would be necessary in the future, with progress being made one step at a time. He personally had enjoyed the discussions and was gratified by their value and level.

132. It was his experience that, on occasion, people who did not belong to the organization sensed a certain attitude existing between the secretariat nad delegations and vice versa. Although a certain amount of creative tension was not only normal but necessary, it was important to be careful not to exceed certain limits. Given the importance and size of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and the relatively small number of people involved, it was essential to have all the creative tension possible but to avoid pursuing a line that could be misconstrued by others.

133. Upon concluding his remarks, and after the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the third special session of the Council closed.

ANNEX I

Decisions adopted by the Governing Council at its third special session

Decision No.	Title	Date of adoption	Page
SS.III/1	Status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification	5 February 1992	31
SS.III/2	Consolidated report of the Secretary-General on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187	5 February 1992	34
SS.III/3	The state of the environment (1972-1992)	5 February 1992	38

SS.III/1. Status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat desertification

The Governing Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/172 of 19 December 1977 on the United Nations Conference on Desertification, specifically paragraph 8 thereof whereby the General Assembly, inter alia, entrusted the Governing Council and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme with the responsibility of following up and coordinating the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 44/172 A of 19 December 1989, by paragraph 6 of which the General Assembly, inter alia, invited the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to contribute substantially to the discussion on desertification at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, inter alia, by undertaking a general evaluation of the progress achieved in implementing the Plan of Action,

Recalling further its decision 12/10 of 28 May 1984, by paragraph 28 of which it decided that an overall assessment of progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action should be carried out in 1992,

Taking note of the report of the Executive Director on the status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, a/

Recognizing that desertification is a process of land degradation resulting mainly from adverse human impact in the specific conditions of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid climates and from complex interactions among physical, chemical, biological, socio-economic and political factors which are of local, national and global nature,

Recognizing further that desertification is a global phenomenon requiring a global response and that it occurs in all continents, directly affecting more than 60 per cent of the countries of the world in both northern and southern hemispheres,

Noting that desertification might have an adverse impact on global climate change and biodiversity, besides diminishing the world food security base and contributing to the growth of poverty,

Recognizing that the cost of anti-desertification measures is escalating from year to year because the areas affected are growing, the degree of damage is increasing and world prices and costs of preventive, corrective and rehabilitative measures are rising,

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a/ UNEP/GCSS.III/3 and Corr.1/Rev.1.

Aware that existing studies and estimates indicate that failure to combat desertification has resulted in the loss of vast amounts of income,

Aware also that the annual costs of combating desertification have been estimated to be less than half the annual costs of inaction,

Concerned at the continuing and expanding rates of land degradation and desertification, estimated to involve about 73 per cent of the rangelands, 47 per cent of the rainfed croplands and 30 per cent of the irrigated lands in the drylands, thus affecting more than 3.6 billion hectares of the total world area of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid lands, or about 25 per cent of the total world land area and about 900 million people, or one sixth of the world population,

Also deeply concerned about the impact of desertification on Africa in particular where it is a serious contributory factor to famines, such as those which occurred in 1984 and 1985, affecting between thirty million and thirty-five million people, and in 1991, when some thirty million people were threatened by famine and needed urgent external food aid in order to survive,

Recognizing that it is imperative to combat desertification in all parts of the world's arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas,

Also recognizing that sustainable socio-economic development and the protection and enhancement of the environment are inseparable prerequisites of human survival and hence anti-desertification campaigns should be managed as integral parts of socio-economic development of the territories and societies of the drylands,

Further recognizing the significant differences in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in industrialized countries, where development generally does not depend on drylands, and in developing countries, particularly in the Sudano-Sahelian belt of Africa, where the development process relies almost entirely on the natural resources base,

1. Notes with appreciation the report of the Executive Director on the status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

2. Reaffirms that desertification is a global environmental and socio-economic problem requiring special attention and global international cooperation in implementing the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

3. Affirms its conviction that the priorities set in combating desertification should normally be site-specific and should be decided upon by the people concerned in accordance with the actual situation in each particular country and locality;

4. Stresses the importance of integrating the policies for combating desertification into national development plans, strengthening capacities at the national level for research, planning, monitoring and implementation activities and international support for these purposes;

5. Recommends, bearing in mind paragraph 3 of the present decision, that the Governments participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development consider, with a view to combating desertification with maximum cost-effectiveness, the following actions and their required resources, in the following order of priority:

(a) The first priority action on a global scale, estimated to cost between $1.4 billion and $4.2 billion per year for twenty years, should involve relevant preventive measures to halt the advance of desertification in non-degraded or only slightly degraded drylands;

(b) The second priority action, estimated to cost between $2.4 billion and $7.2 billion per year for twenty years, should involve implementing corrective measures, in and sustaining the productivity of, moderately degraded drylands;

(c) The third priority action, estimated to cost between $6.2 billion and $11 billion per year for twenty years, should involve the rehabilitation of severely and very severely degraded drylands;

6. Recommends that Governments identify ways and means to provide adequate new and additional financial resources and technical assistance, as well as the transfer of environmentally sound technology on most favourable terms, b/ in particular to the developing countries, to deal with the problem of desertification;

7. Further invites the countries participating in the Global Environment Facility to favourably consider financing programmes to combat desertification;

8. Strongly recommends that Agenda 21, being prepared within the context of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, should address the problem of desertification and that the necessary attention is given to special financing measures to combat desertification;

9. Also strongly recommends that cooperation at the international level to combat desertification should be strengthened in the following areas, particularly with a view to assisting countries, especially developing countries, that cannot cope with the problem by themselves:

(a) Development of pricing and trade policies that would promote sustainable land use and productivity of drylands;

(b) Provision, when required, of technical assistance and appropriate training programmes;

(c) Development of appropriate anti-desertification technologies;

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b/ In accordance with section I, paragraphs 15 (j) and (m), of General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989.

(d) Development of appropriate management systems for drylands and transfer and adaptation of existing and traditional systems;

(e) Monitoring of desertification at the global and regional levels;

(f) Monitoring and coordination of anti-desertification activities at the global and regional levels;

(g) Information exchange and transfer;

(h) Development of necessary national legislation;

10. Requests the Executive Director to transmit his report on the status of desertification and the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, together with the present decision, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development for it to be made available to the Preparatory Committee for the Conference at its fourth session;

11. Invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to being the report of the Executive Director on the status of desertification and implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, together with the present decision, to the attention of the Conference through its Preparatory Committee;

12. Requests the Executive Director:

(a) To give strong emphasis in the work programme of the Desertification Control Programme Activity Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme to:

(i) Refining the assessment of the status of desertification especially at the regional and national levels;

(ii) Promoting the adoption and the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy guidelines and course of action presented in chapter III of the report of the Executive Director;

(iii) Assigning benchmarks and indicators of progress;

(b) To report on the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council at its seventeenth regular session.

5th meeting
5 February 1992

SS.III/2. Consolidated report of the Secretary-General on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187

The Governing Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 42/186 of 11 December 1987, in which the Assembly adopted the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and

Beyond, and 42/187, also of 11 December 1987, in which the Assembly welcomed the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, c/

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 44/227 of 22 December 1989, in which the Assembly expressed its views and recommendations for facilitating and promoting the implementation of resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, based on the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on action taken by Governments and the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system in connection with sustainable and environmentally sound development,

Noting that the Secretary-General, at the request of the General Assembly, submitted a progress report on the implementation of its resolution 44/227 to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session, d/ through the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic and Social Council, and to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Recalling that the General Assembly, by paragraph 20 of its resolution 44/227, also requested the Secretary-General to prepare for submission to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session, through the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic and Social Council, a new consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 by Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system,

Also recalling General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989, in particular section I, paragraphs 15 (j) and (m) thereof,

Recognizing that the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond e/ and the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development have contributed to a significant increase in the awareness of environmental and developmental issues at all levels, and to the increased involvement of citizens at the local level, and also have contributed to an increased mobilization of political will to take the required action,

Also recognizing the important role that the Perspective and the report of the World Commission played in the decision to convene the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989,

1. Notes with appreciation the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/227 on further substantive follow-up of Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, f/

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c/ See UNEP/GC.14/13 and A/42/427, annex.

d/ A/46/138-E/1991/52, transmitted to the Governing Council by a note of the Executive Director (UNEP/GC.16/14).

e/ General Assembly resolution 42/186, annex.

f/ UNEP/GCSS.III/4, annex.

the report being based on information received from thirty-eight Governments and twenty-nine organizations and bodies of the United Nations system;

2. Expresses its satisfaction at the following actions and developments at national level in some developed and developing countries, as indicated in the report:

(a) The preparation of white papers, national environment plans or formal policy statements on the environment and sustainable development reflecting the trans-sectoral nature of these issues;

(b) The issuance of presidential decrees and the holding of national-level conferences, workshops or round tables to build consensus on policy and to mobilize funds to implement environmental action plans within the goal of achieving sustainable development, including natural resources use and green plans;

(c) The highlighting in national policies of the relationship between national action and international cooperation to address global problems, and the increasing participation of concerned groups in the population;

(d) The establishment, strengthening or reorganization of institutions for environmental action and coordination and the relating of them to development;

(e) The incorporation of environmental concerns into the policies and programmes of development sectors;

(f) The strengthening of environmental legislation relating to areas of priority concern and the development of umbrella environmental laws;

(g) Examination and application of economic policy instruments to achieve environmental goals, including through the application of the polluter-pays principle and financial measures such as charges, levies, taxes and cash-deposit systems;

(h) The examination of the use of pricing as a tool for water and forest conservation and for guiding land use to control land degradation;

(i) The use of environmental impact assessment as the pre-eminent tool of environmental decision-making at the project level;

(j) The upsurge, over the last four years, in the involvement of non-governmental organizations, community groups and local people in environmental awareness-building;

(k) The taking of action to encourage the private sector, especially multinational corporations, to participate fully and effectively in the protection and rehabilitation of the environment and in the application of measures to ensure the sustainability of the development process;

3. Notes that organizations and organs of the United Nations system have taken steps to adjust their programmes and activities to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and have:

(a) Expanded, accelerated or intensified activities for environmental awareness-building, information dissemination, expert consultation, intergovernmental consultation and consensus-building, technical cooperation, training, research and development, and institutional networking and strengthening;

(b) Made organizational adjustments to link environmental initiatives to development activities and to monitor and pursue development objectives in tandem with environmental goals, while upholding the necessity of development in order to achieve environmental objectives;

(c) Undertaken additional activities arising from the clarification and strengthening of mandates for action for environmental assessment and management and for sustainable development;

(d) Provided global, regional and national-level support for the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

4. Reaffirms the provisions of Governing Council decision 16/1 of 31 May 1991 and recognizes that the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme to fulfil its original mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 may need to be reviewed in the light of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the decisions adopted by the Assembly at its forty-seventh session;

5. Welcomes the positive development in international cooperation on global environmental issues since the adoption by the General Assembly in 1987 of resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, through, inter alia, the adoption of the London Amendment of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, g/ the adoption of the Basel Convention on the control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, h/ the negotiations for global treaties on climate change and biodiversity, the numerous regional initiatives, as well as the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

6. Recognizes, however, that the progress towards achieving sustainable development remains very limited and uneven in many areas and that further action is required, where appropriate, inter alia, such as is recommended in chapters V and VI of the consolidated report of the Secretary-General;

7. Calls upon Governments to devote increased attention to implementation of action to achieve sustainable development and to allocate the resources required;

8. Also calls upon Governments to identify ways and means to provide, in particular to developing countries, adequate new and additional financial resources, as well as transfer of environmentally sound technology on most favourable terms, for this purpose;

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g/ UNEP/OzL.Pro.2/3, annex II.

h/ See UNEP/IG.80/3.

9. Further calls upon Governments to consider the outlook on sustainable world development presented in chapter V of the Secretary-General's report and, where appropriate, to accelerate further the actions they have already started, as reflected in paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of the present decision, and take new actions to respond to the points raised in that chapter of the report, to further progress towards environmentally sound and sustainable development;

10. Recommends to the General Assembly that the progress towards environmentally sound and sustainable development be periodically reviewed and that it request the Secretary-General to bring to its attention any innovative or promising initiatives in that regard;

11. Invites the Committee of Permanent Representatives together with other interested Governments and in cooperation with the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme to study and prepare proposals for the seventeenth session of the Governing Council for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations Environment Programme in fulfilling its mandate, in accordance with the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the decisions taken by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, also taking into account relevant reports, especially the first- and second-phase studies on the management and organization of the United Nations Environment Programme, prepared in accordance with Governing Council decision 16/6 of 31 May 1991;

12. Invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to bring the present decision and the Secretary-General's consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 to the attention of the Conference through its Preparatory Committee at its fourth session;

13. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Council at its seventeenth regular session on the implementation of the present decision.

5th meeting
5 February 1992

SS.III/3. The state of the environment (1972-1992)

The Governing Council,

I. Analytical report of the Executive Director on the state of the environment (1972-1992) ("The state of the environment (1972-1992): saving our planet - challenges and hopes")

Recalling General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 on institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation in particular section I, paragraph 2 (d) thereof, by which the Assembly decided that one of the main functions and responsibilities of the Governing Council would be to keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments,

Further recalling its decision 15/13 A of 23 May 1989, by paragraph 7 (b) of which it requested the Executive Director to prepare, for presentation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development planned for 1992, a brief analytical report on changes in the state of the world environment since 1972,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, by section I, paragraph 15 (a) of which the Assembly decided that one of the objectives of the Conference, in addressing environmental issues in the development context, should be to examine the state of the environment and changes that have occurred since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in 1972,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the analytical report of the Executive Director entitled "The state of the environment (1972-1992): saving our planet - challenges and hopes"; i/

2. Expresses its deep concern at the evidence adduced in the report and elsewhere of the continued deterioration of the state of the environment in many areas;

3. Requests the Executive Director to bring his analytical report on the state of the environment (1972-1992) and the present decision to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, through its Secretary-General and the Preparatory Committee for the Conference at its fourth session;

II. The state of the environment resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Expressing further its deep concern over the environmental consequences resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and the resulting serious deterioration of the marine, coastal and terrestrial environments and the possible long-term effects of atmospheric pollution, as well as over the adverse socio-economic impacts of these environmental consequences on the States of the region and neighbouring countries,

Having taken note with appreciation of the effort of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, through his personal representative, in confirming the nature and extent of the environmental and socio-economic damage suffered in the region,

Having also taken note with appreciation of the effort of the United Nations inter-agency task force established by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Plan of Action that it developed, and the contributions by various donors to two trust funds established by the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme respectively to deal with the emergency situation in the region,

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i/ UNEP/GCSS.III/2 and Corr.1.

Recognizing the fact that dealing with this environmental catastrophe goes beyond the capabilities of the countries of the region, and hence the need for strengthened international cooperation to deal with the issue,

1. Brings to the attention of the Governments the urgent need for the rehabilitation of the environmental destruction in the region, with particular emphasis on marine life cycles (fisheries) and possible long-term deleterious effects on human health, as made evident by the findings of the United Nations inter-agency task force established by the United Nations Environment Programme to assess the environmental situation in that area, in accordance with the Consolidated Rehabilitation Programme prepared by the Governments of the region in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and all relevant United Nations agencies and organs as well as other international organizations;

2. Invites the international community, Governments and intergovernmental organizations - within and outside the United Nations system - to participate actively, technically and financially, in rehabilitation programmes aimed at the mitigation of the environmental deterioration of the region, and in the strengthening of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment to enhance its capability to coordinate and implement these programmes;

3. Requests the Executive Director to bring the present decision and the Consolidated Rehabilitation Programme to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development through its Preparatory Committee, and to cooperate fully with the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment in the implementation of the Rehabilitation Programme.

5th meeting
5 February 1992

ANNEX II

List of documents before the Governing Council at its third special session

Symbol	Title
UNEP/GCSS.III/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP/GCSS.III/1/Add.1/Rev.1 and Corr.1	Annotated provisional agenda and organization of the work of the session
UNEP/GCSS.III/2 and Corr.1	The state of the environment (1972-1992): saving our planet - challenges and hopes: report of the Executive Director
UNEP/GCSS.III/2/Add.1 and Corr.1	The state of the environment (1972-1992): suggested action by the Governing Council
UNEP/GCSS.III/3 and Corr.1/Rev.1	Status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification: note by the Executive Director
UNEP/GCSS.III/3/Add.1 and Corr.1	Status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification: suggested action by the Governing Council
UNEP/GCSS.III/4 and Corr.1	Consideration of the Secretary-General's consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187: note by the Executive Director
UNEP/GCSS.III/4/Add.1	Implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/227 - consolidated report of the Secretary-General: suggested action by the Governing Council
UNEP/GCSS.III/5 and Corr.1	Introductory statement by the Executive Director to the third special session of the UNEP Governing Council
UNEP/GCSS.III/L.1	Status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification: draft decision submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives
UNEP/GCSS.III/L.2	Consideration of the Secretary-General's consolidated report on further substantive follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187: draft decision submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Symbol	Title
UNEP/GCSS.III/L.3	The state of the environment (1972-1992): draft decision submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives
UNEP/GCSS.III/Inf.1	Report on the state of preparedness of documents for the third special session
UNEP/GCSS.III/Inf.2 and Corr.1	Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the studies requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/172 A on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification: note by the Executive Director
UNEP/GCSS.III/Inf.3	Draft chapter 24 of the comprehensive state-of-the-environment report (1972-1992): note by the Executive Director

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